

THE
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THE DOUBLE DEALER

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AND MARGINALIA

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The DOUBLE DEALER

".....I can deceive them both by speaking the truth."

A NATIONAL MAGAZINE FROM THE SOUTH

HERALDS this issue, Volume II, of the *Double Dealer*. Over perilous water we have, at length, brought Volume I safely to port. At times it has seemed necessary to stop our ears against the courtesies of critics as, it is said, Ulysses stopped the ears of his men against the songs of the Sirens. For our reception has been much pleasanter than ever we anticipated.

An adventure such as this could not, however, be without its vicissitudes. The seas were rough, the goal far, and the bark frail. Various were the indictments lodged. For some we were too flippant, for others too highbrow. Where one reader found us "up in the air," another protests us "of the earth, earthy." Convicted on various counts by sundry judges we could but carry on with Chaplinesque nonchalance knowing the end near—an ambiguity, perhaps, annoying to subscribers. But rest assured, good patrons, "the end is not yet."

Heralds, also, this issue a slight change in program. From "A Magazine for the Discriminating" we have now become "A National Magazine from the South." This change for some time premeditated is but the first of several

forthcoming. It is self-explanatory. Here beginning it is purposed to provide a national medium for Southern writers and readers, and to further and encourage, to the best of our ability, the younger and more ambitious of our sectional penmen and women

This does not mean, however, that the "imported stuff" is to go out. The imported matter will continue to go in, and in the same quantity, unless the quality of the Southern matter meets our standard. It seems most unfortunate, aye, almost shameful that we grandsons and daughters of the "late Confederacy" will not take the required pains which make for more virile expression.

Ours is an enviable heritage, an indisputable birthright, and it is chiefly because of this background—the only solid background, barring perhaps that of New England, in America—that we should have a voice. The *Double Dealer* extends the facilities for this voice.



THE DEAD HAND

WE all know what a taboo is. It is a prohibition laid upon a whole race against a certain course of action, which becomes traditional and gathers weight with time. For instance, a tribe of "savages" in

one of the Solomon Islands discovers the sago palm. They press the poisonous juice from the pulp, regale themselves on sago, and guzzle the sap. Of course it turns out to be the last supper for a goodly majority. Instantly the sago palm becomes taboo to the tribe. In time it acquires a demoniac reputation, with supernatural overtones. To eat of the sago is then not only unhealthy but sinful, a blasphemy which is punished by death. Then some day comes the sceptic who, perhaps out of pure perversity, questions the centuries of sacred traditions. He presses the juice out of the sago, and eats the pulp. His black companions wait excitedly for the expected vengeance of the sago spirit. Miracle of miracles—none occurs. The man must be a god himself, or at least the son of a god. He is obeyed, bowed down to, and any idiotic utterance treasured as divine revelation for the generations ahead. So the world progresses.

These are savages. Of course among civilized people (e. g. ourselves) other conditions obtain. *We* are governed by rational development. We have the benefit of science. We are the "heirs of the ages." The world *does* move. We are controlling nature more every day. Harnessing the sun; plowing with the pressure of the mountains. We control all nature except human nature. Here we drift between the taboos of our fathers and the affirmations of our great grandfathers, and call the change, "advance"—savages with sewerage. Aborigines in automobiles. Scratch a tax payer and you have a Tahitan; a senator a Senegambian. The sum total of this kind of civilization is to substi-

tute for bows and arrows, poison gas and T. N. T. We have children monkeying with the levers of the power houses of human government, where the power has now become tremendous, terrible in its deadly capacity.

What is going to be the outcome? Is the world to blunder along arrogant in its new mechanical advantage to total annihilation, or are we going to throw over our dread heritage of hatred and prejudice, which seems to us a precious wisdom. Can we work out the situation in commonsense as we would the ordinary problem that besets our private life? I think not. The world of affairs is cluttered with dead men's ideals and dreams. We refuse to look into the heart of the problem at all. Rather do we content ourselves with the same empty phrases and words that our ancestors loved. "Liberty, Equality, Independence." We are still scared out of our wits by impossible threats, even as our swarthy, more décolleté brothers. We still love to be ordered around, believing anything and bowing down to anything which speaks firmly with a loud voice of power, preferring slavery to the insecurity of relying upon ourselves. And we are fixed in our stagnation, clotted against change by a tremendous code of morality, loyalty, righteousness, which is used by shrewd men to more advantage than the employment of a corps of machine-gunners.

"The mind of the race," says Morrison Swift, "is burdened with a mass of useless and harmful trash, and man's thoughts are a matchless mosaic of dead men's imbecilities." And Joseph Conrad speaks in his last book of the

illiterate (that is the ordinary man, you or me) ". . . who even from the dreadful wisdom of their evoked dead have so far culled nothing but inanities and platitudes."

From out this charnel house of decayed thought is a weary way. I question whether it can be traversed. Surely we can hope to get nowhere with our present idea that we have progressed because devices for fast transportation whirl us more quickly toward our graves. We must forget the idea that "all's right with the world" (or will be after a few strikes have been settled and a few indemnities paid). The world as we know it, civilization, is in the death grip. Our only hope is for a host of valiant pessimists, not over-night reformers, nor crazy-quilt patchworkers. We need tearers-down, clearers-of-the-ground. We need liberation from the iron rule of the dead hand.



PEGASUS AND THE HOBBY HORSE

THE rider of Pegasus, a professional jockey in the lists of Fame, goads his winged steed to a fall or finish. The "Hobby" rider, an amateur sportsman, less fortunate, perhaps, than his dedicated brother, mounts his toy jennet "after hours" decked

Cap-a-pie

For Arcady.

Stevenson once wrote, "Perpetual devotion to what a man calls his business is only to be sustained by perpetual neglect of many other things. And it is

not by any means certain that a man's business is the most important thing he has to do." Thus, too, argues the "hobby" rider. And he is not easily discredited judging from the races he has run and won.

A man's business, in many instances, is simply a means to livelihood; a labor necessary to provide the wherewithal of existence; at best, a banal avocation. His calling, his vocation — colorless words—better, his urge, may be in the direction of pigs, poultry, painting, playing golf or the saxophone, quill-driving.

The world's lawn tennis champion is a life insurance agent. The official archivist of Canada is a tailor. A certain famous sculptor is a veterinary surgeon. The ranks of novelists, poets, painters and composers are filled with these oddly inconsistent fellows. To become personal, Louis Untermeyer, distinguished both as poet and critic, is a jeweller by trade. Francis Carlin, another lyric brother, is a floorwalker in a great New York department store. Knut Hamsun, the Norwegian novelist, winner of the Nobel prize, was for some time a street car conductor in Chicago. John Masefield is, self confessed, ex-busboy and bartender. Kenneth Graham, author of "Dream Days" and "The Golden Age" was "something in the Bank of England," Pierre Loti was a naval officer; Madison Cawein, the Kentucky poet, I am told, a professional gambler. The exhibits are numerous. Some day, mood and leisure prevailing, I shall sit down and roll them off for the diversion of the thing.

In my acquaintance I know of several interesting cases, one being the chief

auditor of a big railroad concern in Chicago and no mean bard "on the side;" another being that of a plasterer-poet; a third, an undertaker who paints porcelains; still another, a well known author-illustrator whose work-a-day job is that of automobile mechanic. The professions—legal, medical, academic—teem with "hobby" riders. But I believe the drollest case of all is that of a pompous pock-faced politician, ward-boss and bully for a large city, who does exquisite miniatures.

Well, what am I trying to prove? Simply this, that generation on generation of men, compelled by force of circumstance and a not unworthy distaste for garret and gutter, have rather than stake all—comfort, families, self-respect—on the Pegasean Steeplechase, contented themselves in their spare time with spurring little old "Hobby" for the fun of the thing. And absurd, though it seems, many of these amateur jockies, in the long run, far and away out-distance their professional competitors. It's the love of the sport that does it!

Observe your friends about you. Who are the interesting personalities? Are they not those who close their offices at closing time and forget their dull business in pursuit of some harmless hobby or other until opening time on the morrow? Take Stevenson's tip, ride old "Hobby" for all he is worth and, peradventure, some day you will find yourself careering down the field on Messire Fortune's favorite to a whirlwind finish.



AN OLD SAW REFILED

SEVERAL thousand years back an Arab philosopher said:
 "It is well to know the truth and speak it, but it is better to know the truth and speak about palm-trees."

Over the span of centuries we have grown wise; proudly we point to ourselves as "moderns"; we say we are "civilized." Above the turmoil of marching progress we hear shouted the imperious words Efficiency and Reform; and peeping beyond the horizons of our own well ordered little lives, we behold vast devices for the annihilation of our fellows. Down the years the great race of humans has experimented, failing here, succeeding there for a moment in knowing the truth and speaking it; yet it has stubbornly gone back to the second part of the old philosopher's dictum that it is better to speak about palm-trees.

It appears that we shall never grow wise enough to get beyond the inanity of our simple actions. It is probable that we shall always remain children and shudder forever at the idea of truth, the bitter potion, and continue to knock the spoon that contains it from the hand of our counsellors, letting the consequences go hang.

Undeniably, life, human experience, truth are bitter at best. Well, we must have our soothing syrups. To be effective, you argue, they must not resemble too severely this same bitter life on which we are continually being forcibly fed. But it is these very soothing syrups against which I protest. Examine them and you will discover that they are the subtle concoctions of purveyors

to mass appeal. Grotesquely unreal pictures of things, like *The Happy Ending* or *The Perfect Leg*. If they were but salad for the imagination one might pass them by, but behold, they are the victuals upon which imagination feeds.

At intervals the case for human credulity is not so black as I have painted it. For instance, the Main Street school in literature. This is bed-rock realism and it has succeeded with surprising alacrity. The country has stormed the libraries and bought several thousand copies of Mr. Lewis' book alone, which, if practically worthless as literature, is tonic to the disordered mind. Superficially, a sign for the good, I say, but in the midst of my optimism comes a public voice, a man named Meredith Nicholson who avers that we must "let Main Streets alone" or else hymn their "intelligence and praiseworthy curiosity as to things of good report." This is buncombe, of course, but unfortunately, the populace, once it has got over the passing fad of Main Street will loudly cheer Mr. Nicholson's opinion.

But my opponents will howl me down. They will tell me I am a prosaic clod who, left unshackled, would pluck romance and fantasy from their healthy individualities, close up Arcady and hand the little children text-books in sociology. They say I would preach them an artistic expression that is a repellent mass of earthy literalness. One gentleman of my acquaintance, a leader in industry, will read these lines, and smiling knowingly, will call me a "Red."

Well, indeed, I am not sure of anything. It is possible that my forefather, the Arab, has preceded me in wisdom.

Nevertheless, I cannot refrain from sounding my feeble note of warning.

Beware of the soothing syrups. Perhaps you have a child in rearing. When he was very young you did not overdose him with these syrups simply to stop his bawling. As he grows older he balks at divers nasty things that you force doggedly but sensibly down his throat, because you know them to be beneficial to his physical development. Now that he is coming to the age when he can get an objective on the hurly-burly of life, I suggest that you apply the same process to his education; I suggest, if it is not too late, that you apply it to your own.



THE SOUTHERN PRESS

WHAT general indications have we of the South's cultural awakening? The awakening is a fact. Sporadically throughout the South, isolated groups or individuals are quickening to intellectual activity. Southern genius undoubtedly is again asserting itself in literature, art and thought.

But, after all, what indications have we of a *general* cultural awakening? The index of group consciousness is the daily press. Is there in any newspaper of the South any evidence whatever of an interest on the part of its readers in literature—which is to say, in thought? From reading the daily press of the South who could divine that the people of the South ever heard of a book?

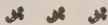
The metropolitan newspapers of the

North and East reflect the literature and art of those communities and of the nation. Excellent literary pages and supplements indicate a civilized interest in culture, in thought, in the amenities of the intellectual life. But in the South—what can one find in the newspapers to indicate that Southern people ever heard of a book?

The press of the South has in no way responded to the cultural awakening. Copy consists of news, cartoons, and advice to the lovelorn. There is no indication, or very little, that Southern people think or read, or that they are hospitable to thinkers, or writers, or artists. Occasionally one discovers

through an editorial that the editor is a civilized man who thinks and reads; that is about all. The papers proper, which are supposed to reflect the consciousness of the community, treat literature as if it did not exist.

The Double Dealer believes that the southern press is not culturally dead—merely sleepy. Sooner or later it must awake to the growing intelligence of its community. Sooner or later it must begin to reflect the higher forms of human endeavor, as the Eastern and Northern press has reflected them for generations. For the cultural quickening of the South is a fact. The demand for intellectual nutrition increases.



I tell you: one must still have chaos in one to give birth to a dancing star. I tell you ye have still chaos in you. Alas! There cometh the time when man will no longer give birth to any star. Alas! There cometh the time of the most despicable man who can no longer despise himself.—*Nietzsche*.



Seven Days

By GRACE HAZARD CONKLING

I. DECEMBER

We spoke of rain tangled with silver air
Below driving cloud,
But our thoughts were bewildered blossoms
of the same tree
Clinging hard against a Spring wind:
We had come to apple-petals in a calendar
of our own
But we talked of winter weather.

II. MEMORANDA.

It was you put a pool of purple light
where I could plunge at will;
It was you pinned the violet dawn
to my finger.
When distance is a dusk prairie between us
with no road home
I shall be needing this amethyst of yours
for a lantern.
That is why you may never have it
back again
To hide behind the wall of the big trunk
that locks,
Among other memoranda
of lost loves.

III "POOR TIRED PIGEON."

If you were not in the color of the wind
today,
Not in the gleam on the roads,
If I missed you coming down the turnpike
beyond the seven white birches,
I had something to think about!
It was that broken gray-blue light, that pity
and humor
Once when your eyes caught me up into
their depths,
When your hands smoothed the ruffled
feathers of my thinking,
When your voice loved me back to life with
words I remember.

IV CHEAP CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

Not chrysanthemums for me, however the
price beckons!
Hedge barberries strung on a bronze twig
cost nothing at all.

Or if your whim require the Japanese,
Why not a maple leaf with painted script of
frost,
Hokku written overnight
About a lover who found the chrysanthemum
moon
Not for sale?

V INTERVAL.

I have sat here wistful in the half-dusk
Thinking of hills we watched at evening
And of full pools
Folded like gray roses
After sundown,
And of how the moon came leaning
To show me bluebells in the crevice of the
rock
And that stillness
In your eyes. . . .

VI ALL I CAN MAKE YOU NOW.

All I can make you now
Will not satisfy you:
You are wanting a loveliness that should
last.
How long will it take for the light to reach
me
Of those stars you keep wishing
Into my sky?

You will not have time
To wait for me.
Don't you know I would delay you with
poems
If I could?
And one should be like a pomegranate
Full of coral seeds,
And one, like a night-sky throbbing with the
passion
Of your great stars.

VII MONOTONOUS.

Not while you labor from guilt noon of a No-
vember day
Till ten o'clock of a brittle November night
To carve my love like an enchanted ivory
Into a shape less difficult for you to recog-
nize!

The White Calvary

By EDWIN CARLILE LITSEY

THE winter had been long and merciless to the furred and feathered knob dwellers of central Kentucky. Early in November the gates of the North swung open, and on one awful night of storm the icy wind sealed up every brook and pool and pond, while the snow which came just before buried under a twelve inch covering all grain and berries. Many of the birds wisely had sought a warmer climate weeks before, but many had remained, heedless of the warning offered by the frosty nights of late autumn. So food and drink were snatched from them in a night, for, unlike many of their fourfooted neighbors, they are not provident, and lay away no winter stores. Just how they lived during this bitter time it would be difficult to say. Probably alternate fasting and freezing, with occasional nocturnal flights to some barnyard where pigs or chickens were fed, in a desperate search for sustenance.

It was better for the fur bearers, though hard for them, too. The squirrel and chipmunk and maybe one or two others had a miscellaneous supply of food in their hiding places, but the opossum and rabbit and fox had nothing whatsoever laid by. They, too, had to live, and often it became a grievous and heart-breaking task, when all Nature seemed to conspire against their further existence. For ice-bound streams yield no water to thirsty little throats, and snow-covered fields and hills present nothing in the way of food.

Remote and lonely in the green season, when winter came these regions were the abode of perpetual silence. This year snow had followed snow with brief and inadequate melting periods between, and all animal life was held by a precarious tenure.

Far up the side of a precipitous knob a she fox had her home. Numerous small caves had formed along this knob in the process of time, and it was in one of these that the vixen had found a refuge. Whelps had come that spring, a litter of four, and the mother had plenty of business to attend to while they were young. It takes milk to rear baby foxes as it does baby humans, and there can be no milk without nourishment. Night after night the mother stole forth and prowled for food, and usually succeeded in her quest. The little foxes grew rapidly, and rolled and played happily about the floor of their den. Then one day a tragedy occurred, such as might happen to the well ordered lives of humans.

There were numerous ledges jutting out from the walls of the cave, and one day, in their aimless frolicking, two of the more adventurous puppies scrambled agilely up to one of these. Here, in the friendly scuffle which ensued, they dislodged a rather heavy stone lying there, which fell upon the back of a little brother who happened to be standing just beneath. Just how badly he was hurt they of course could not tell, but he yelped sharply with pain at first, and thereafter lay throughout the rest

of the day where he had fallen, whimpering now and again, but making no attempt to walk.

The mother fox was sleeping in a corner at the time of the accident, and accustomed as she was to snarls and barks from her offsprings, did not waken. That night when she came back from her hunting with food between her jaws, only three half starved little demons pounced upon her kill. She missed the fourth, and went nosing here and there in search, for the place was dark as a pit. Presently she came upon him, still lying where the stone had knocked him down. Her quick wit told her that something was wrong, but she could not tell what. For a few moments she hovered about her hurt child, while the other three were fighting over their feast, then she fell to licking the maltreated little form, which whined and moaned pitifully. The vixen made no effort to move him, as one of the cat tribe most probably would have done, but after a while lay down very close to him, in a protecting posture.

The little fox proved to be badly injured. He ate only at long intervals, and then sparingly. Time and again he would try to walk, but he only could get upon his fore feet. The chance blow had injured his spine, and he could not use his hind legs. And he stopped growing. The others passed quickly through puppyhood, and practically were grown by Fall. Then, lured by the wide outdoors, and urged by the inherited wander spirit, they took to roaming, and often were gone weeks at a time. The unexpected early snows caught them far from the scene of their nativity, and so the she fox and her crippled

child faced the rigors of this awful winter alone.

Few of us who live in the midst of civilization's comforts can realize the position in which the two were placed. The simple condition of living depended upon constant, resourceful and heroic effort. And with the snow nearly as high as her back on the level, and all sources of water icebound, the task merely of keeping alive required a dauntless heart and a fertile brain. Day after day she lay and watched in bright eyed mystification the dwarfed form which grew no larger, and which slept most of the time. The only progress of which it was capable was a laborious crawl. Of course the faithful mother could not understand what had come to pass but she knew that here was something which was helpless and dependent upon her entirely. And she arose to the responsibility.

Forage she must, or die. The demand upon her was not so great as when the whelps were babies, and just finding their legs. Well for her that it was not. She had learned to fast from sheer necessity, and the sick one never ate much, but there came times when hunger awoke within her so fiercely that she had to obey its call. Go we on four feet or two, Hunger is a master all of us must obey. With unerring intuition, she knew which routes to take that drifts and pits might be avoided. The hills were full of treacherous spots, and a false step at many points in her enforced wanderings would mean her death. Wild nature is not always kind to her wild creatures. Indeed, it would seem that at times she deliberately sets snares for their destruction.

Day after day and week after week of the merciless weather passed. All wild life huddled in its burrows or dens or clefts or crannies. The opossums and racoons and squirrels stayed in their homes in the hollows of trees; the groundhogs and chipmunks hibernated in their hidden rooms; the skunks and weasels and minks and foxes lay close in their respective dens, all waiting for the south wind which meant a thaw, liberation, and renewed life and freedom.

One afternoon near the middle of February the vixen, curled on the floor of her cave in somnolent ease, suddenly lifted her sharp muzzle, while her nostrils twitched. It was not a sound which had aroused her. But as she lay with half closed eyes fastened upon the broken body of the puppy which would not grow, a peculiarly fresh scent had come to her trained olfactory nerves. It was a moist wafture reminiscent of spring, laden with the odor of damp earth. Swiftly as thought and silently as a shadow she arose, and stole on padded feet to the entrance of her home. There she stood and scanned the perspective of vast solitudes, and the sky above. The clouds were low and leaden, and the intense cold had lessened. Was relief coming at last? Even as she gazed powdery snow began falling. She went back in her den and lay down once more, and began to gnaw the dry bones of a rabbit she had caught three days before.

After a while darkness settled down. It snowed till near midnight, then the wind veered, and it grew colder. Colder and colder, until the she fox awakened and went and curled her body about her

helpless offspring, seeking and giving warmth at the same time.

The next day the puppy whined at intervals throughout the long, cheerless hours, but whether from cold, pain or hunger the mother did not know. But her own plight was becoming desperate again, for the sharp teeth of famine worried her worn frame. About dusk the puppy dragged itself to the closest rabbit bone and began to lick it, trembling from weakness as it did so. This act decided the vixen. She might wait another day herself, with the aid of merciful sleep, but her child was starving before her eyes. Food must be obtained for it, and that quickly. It was a problem huge enough to overcome the bravest heart.

Night again, with a sky from which the wind had blown every vestige of cloud; a sky brilliant with white, cold stars and lighted pallidly by a frozen moon. As the mother fox stepped softly without to start upon her perilous errand of mercy and love, it seemed that a dead world encompassed her. Snow everywhere, and cold so intense that it hit her throat when she breathed. A thin, knife-like wind was eddying through the valleys and along the slopes, and it raised in little ridges the reddish brown fur on the gaunt body of the vixen. She shivered involuntarily, cast a look at the black opening behind her, then started forward upon her adventure.

An outjutting ledge of stone ran along the knob parallel with her cave for a great distance. Under this ledge there was little snow, and it was this path the she fox took first. Its shelter might well have seemed a refuge to some hard

pressed wood dweller, so the shadowy form moved cautiously, every nerve on the alert. Rod after rod she trotted, but encountered no encouragement. Eyes, ears or nose conveyed no welcome intelligence to her brain. It seemed as though the whole world was dead and wrapped in white, and that she was the only living thing in it.

At last the protecting ledge dwindled away and disappeared, and she stood facing limitless, inhospitable areas of snow. Nothing moved, nothing called, nothing stirred. Icy stillness, desolation, despair. Where should she go, and whither should she turn? It was all one, for the search was blind. The familiar paths and trails she had known of old were gone, blocked, obliterated. Perplexed and desperate, the she fox turned her gaze toward the top of the knob, not far off from where she stood. Instantly her body stiffened and sank half way to earth, as though seeking concealment. The crest toward which she gazed was roughly conical in shape, and almost bare of vegetation. What little there was stood stripped and bare. Near the center of the rounded top was the stump of a tree which some former storm had overthrown. This stump perhaps was four feet high, and on its top sat that which had caused the starved raider below to grow rigid, while saliva oozed from her shut mouth, to freeze before it could drop from her jaw.

A great hoot owl was roosting there. Clear against the sky his form was outlined, still as though carved from stone. Was he sleeping, or on the lookout? He was a night hunter, and for him, too, the winter had been hard. Any moment

he might leave his perch. The she fox knew this, and she knew further that quick and noiseless action on her part was imperative. Was he facing her, or not? That was another question of vital importance, for her dark body would show plainly against the white background she must traverse. From where she stood to her objective point the snow was not so deep, for the exposed position of the knob's crest had allowed the wind to sweep it rather clean. But enough remained to betray her.

Straining her preternaturally keen eyes, the vixen focussed them upon the owl's head. The moon shone full upon it, and then the she fox saw that no beak or eye tufts were visible. Luck had come at last; the bird's back was toward her. A little rain-washed gully led upward from almost at her feet. She took and followed it as far as it went, then there was twenty or thirty feet of bare, open space, shining brightly with crystals of snow. It was a white and perilous way, but she must follow it, quickly.

Crouching so that her belly brushed the little drifts, she crept forward, forward, swiftly and more swiftly. While she was yet twice her length from the stump the great bird moved, and slowly turned its head. Instantly its big wings quivered, but stiff from cold, they opened slowly. The delay was long enough. Like arrow from bow the vixen leaped. Weakened by privation and fasting, she sprang short, but her vise-like teeth found and closed over one leg of the huge owl. Down they came together, the one silent and determined, the other with wildly flapping wings and clack-

ing beak and ripping, thrusting talons. Over and over the top of the knob they threshed, enveloped in a cloud of fine white crystals which their struggles created. Then directly—both disappeared. Their blind efforts had carried

them over a cliff's edge, into a pit of drifted snow a half score feet in depth.

And the stars were tapers, and the moon a priest, while the wind sang an eerie requiem for the sacrifice.



Like Some North-Coast Adventurer of Old

By GUSTAV DAVIDSON

Like some north-coast adventurer of old
Upon a tempest-tossed and darkling sea
Guiding his troubled sail as dauntlessly,
Through mist, through lashing wave,
 through dark, through cold,
As though the elements could not withhold
This spirit from its port of destiny
Whither it moves so steadfast and so free,
Fearless of shipwreck, confident and bold.

Thus do I hail you, Captain, Commodore!
Watching your gallant prow as o'er the deep
It plunges onward to the farther shore.
Within your eyes that will not yield to sleep
There shines a Light, O helmsman at the fore!
And in your heart the ancient grandeurs keep.

The Curse of Things

By STEPHEN TA VAN

IT lay heavily, the Curse of things, upon the house where I was born; that tall brick dwelling, guarded thickly by elms and maples, on gloomy Hesketh Street in the most aristocratic neighborhood of Ware.

The period was Victorian. The house had been built extravagantly, not long before the war to which all good New Englanders referred, then and thereafter for many years, as the Rebellion. The rooms were high and large, plastered, with woodwork of black walnut and fluted marble fireplaces, unreasonably heavy and ornate. Parlors, dining-room and bedrooms occupied nine tenths of the space, while service arrangements had been crowded into dark and narrow corners. Only the basement kitchen had resisted the subordination of comfort to splendor. With its opulent built-in range, it was of a capacity to supply the needs and withstand the onslaughts of Pilgrim-descended owners, who were plethoric trenchermen and entertainers.

Rich and plentiful were the furnishings. Every corner had its "handsome" chair or table, and every table its vase or statuette in bronze or marble. Apollo Belvidere opposed Ajax Telamon, and in the stairway-niche, backed by starry blue, stood a draped and crowded, three-quarters life-size figure called without certainty Diana.

The first impression in the principal parlor was of a Roman-gold sunburst. Paintings in oil infested the walls, each portrait or landscape surrounded by a

massive intrenchment of gilt, against which its dark colors struggled well-nigh hopelessly.

The landscapes had the appearance of purchase by the yard. Several of the portraits had been perpetrated in partnership, that is: a pair of painters had collaborated, one attacking the face, the other the clothes and background of the sitter. Both of my maternal great-grandfathers had submitted to this wholesale rendering, with startling outcomes; but the most astounding triumph of collective portraiture hung in an upper chamber, where Great-Uncle Enoch, aetat. eight, sat pensively in long strapped breeches, over a leoparded cat.

From cornices above the windows depended heavy curtains, the mantel had its drapery, the furniture was upholstered heavily in plush. Expensive ornaments were everywhere; an inventory would have resembled a museum's catalogue.

Each ornament and piece of furniture was historical, inseparably bound up with family events. In the low wicker chair Aunt Margaret had liked to sit, before she eloped with the Bishop's son, and died in Denver in a manner described whisperingly by the women. The bronze urn had been brought by Cousin George from Italy, the clock was souvenir of a wedding-trip to France.

All of these possessions were cared for meticulously—were dusted, polished, nursed with a morbid assiduity. In addition there were many chattels

which required special worship and reposed usually in safer quarters; elaborate silver sets and salvers, for example, brought out only upon state occasions, from the bank's vault.

An expedition to the bank, and the subsequent return, with mysterious precautions, took on the aspect of the secret transfer of a beloved idol.

Damage to any treasure was a tragedy, remembered through the years. Never shall I forget the breakage of "Aunt Ellen's little Wedgwood pitcher," a pure accident. One would have thought I had shattered her honor, and I have no doubt that she grieved, poor soul, for the knickknack, to her dying day.

The attachment to Things extended to clothing and trifles. Old garments were treasured, a pocket-knife was a permanence, its loss a woe. Women preserved in moth-balls not only their wedding gowns, but their husbands' wedding trousers. In the nursery, emotional fireworks were frequent.

"Oh, oh, just see! You have broken the nice, nice horsie!" was merely the beginning of a long sermon on the sensitive nature of toy horses and the enormity of breaking them.

It was in general a sentimental time, the flower day of "Locksley Hall" and virtuous Mr. Gladstone in England, of Longfellow and his associate Pundits in America. Children were allowed, nay encouraged, to read the Rollo, Elsie and Franconia books, and haled to church to bow down before the nightmare of a gigantic purple-bearded School Principal.

The home I have described was one of culture. Its fetiches included no ghast-

ly Rogers Groups, no Othello-and-Desdemona chromo framed in plush, or hardwood floors with Turkish pit-falls strewn on them; no cosy corners, pianolamps, or tidies. In nearby neighborhoods all of those abominations flourished, and the farther down the social scale you went, within a medium, the more hideous furnishings you found, accompanied by as desperate a devotion.

We laugh at the simple-mindedness of the Victorians, but have we improved on them in fact, or only after a fashion?

In one of his labored analyses Theodore Dreiser writes of the typical American's frenzied ambition to "build himself a stuffy home to take the count in." I think that Dreiser in his muffled brilliance has hinted a great truth; the constant, frightened endeavor of the second rate intelligence to fight off dissolution by surrounding itself with Things.

The American only imagines that he builds his stuffy house to die in. In truth he builds it, and fills it and his mind with paraphernalia, in order to lure himself into the delusion that he is thereby protected against the death that has arrived inevitably in every case save his. Bolstering pretense with pretense, he comes to consider the house his coffin in name only. He carves it, polishes it, ornaments it with silver handles and bedecks it with flowers. He pats it on the sides and lid, and says to it, "Good coffin!" thinking by familiarity to wheedle away the curse. Tending and refining it, he nearly persuades himself that he has changed its character; but it turns out to be a coffin, after all, and he has been a funeral-hound essentially, as were those Victorian relatives of mine, and their friends, who patronized

the actual funeral and death-bed with a different ritual of naive hypocrisy.

Life is no more than a symbol, of which the spirit's music is the sound of a bugle in a distant valley, faint and elusive if heard at all. All Things are symbols, mocking when conceived as facts. There is no drably-drearier exhibit than a traveller down the slope which my dear Aunt Ellen was wont to call "the shady side of Life," frenetically clutching at bright pebbles on the descent—whether they be the pebbles of Doctor Crane or those of Cartier, Bendel or Gunther, fine words, fine jewels or rich clothes. The pebbles grow dull, the traveller rubs them and strives to bring their polish back, or discards them to grasp at others. The path grows steeper, all the pebbles fade. There is consternation, terror, the shriek, then the last crazy flurry in the dark.

Asceticism, the grim avoidance of Things, has also had its vogue whenever there was opportunity. Only yesterday Thoreau—a New Englander willy-nilly—went out into the woods to be away from them, not too successfully.

Why have people been afraid of Things? They are not dreadful, if their sting be drawn. It is the fear of them that curses.

In that New England environment of my boyhood, I was continually warned not only against impiety and breakage, but against wastage in the sense of expenditure.

"You must be careful, you must learn the value of money," my mentors impressed on me.

They were not stingy, but over them hung the cold fear of losing the con-

comitants of luxury, of being separated from the mass of chattels and friendships with which they had managed to surround themselves. They could visualize only with scorn and disgust an existence unsupported by contact with a great number of respectable Things, animate and otherwise.

The favorite phrase "the value of money" really connoted finance less exactly than solidity of social habit. Of the value of money in exchange for imagination, they know next to nothing.

I remember the apposite case of "poor Amy." Returning to visit in Ware after a long absence, I heard reference made pityingly to Amy Sawyer, second daughter of the major pillar of a prominent family. In reply to casual inquiry I was told that the attractive but unfortunate girl had married worthlessly.

Of excellent social connections, amiable, willing, faithful, the husband had proved a complete failure in the Sawyer clock factory, into which he had been inducted in accordance with time-honored family policy. He was industrious enough, but possessed not an atom of executive ability. A trial with the allied Rubber Company was equally futile. Roger simply didn't fit, and the Sawyers were "terribly mortified."

The initial mortification, however, was a bagatelle compared to that which afflicted them when Roger finally "took hold." For what should he and Amy do but find and lease an old, ramshackle country inn, and go to catering in it to motorists! . . . A daughter of Sawyers! A couple of exclusive Ware, selling food to tourists!

Further inquiry developed the facts that the project was successful practic-

ally; that the outrageous couple were happy and their offspring healthy; that the performance had been, in brief, the fortunate transfer of intelligent persons from an environment unsuited to their development, to one which was favorable.

This aspect of the situation failed utterly to appeal to my good friends, who continued to drip pity and condolence. What a maddening experience, they exclaimed for Madam Sawyer, driving pleasantly along a country turnpike, to send her chauffeur into a common hostelry to telephone, and encounter her grand-daughter in charge, and the graceless young woman's husband drawing gasoline for vulgar New York Jews! Doubtless Amy and her young man, in their hostelry, were surrounded by half as many things as Madam Sawyer, but the things they had were tools, not mere possession. Instead of building up a castle of illusion they used them as aids to continued effort which they chanced to find worth while. The curse was off.

Personally I am not fond of inns, from the inn-side, and as to the Roman Life—the gay freedom of fields and woods, and all that—when anyone cries Ho! for it, I squint the eyes and consider. Having done some gypsying (as well as innkeeping), I am in the Missouri attitude with regard to those pursuits. I opine quite frankly that as War is hell, so is vagabondage mostly degenerate in fact and nonsensical in fancy. I hold the opinion for the same reason that I think a republic an anomaly, democracy a lie; Blasco Ibañez a third-rate novelist, "Jurgen" somewhat overrated by the supposedly judicious; Mencken in danger (if he be not wary)

of being dulled in his fine edge by that damned college-praise; Mr. Ford and Mr. Edison colossal asses, outside of their respective special fields. I think so, that is, because the evidence seems to me to warrant it.

But as I have admitted, such opinions are largely personal, and my point is, as in Amy's case, that Things should be handled as tools, not elevated to the place of purposes.

For example, it would seem to me an admission of failure, to be flabbergasted at the age of seventy, after having collected much property and many social affiliations, by the simple insertion of an unexpected hour of time.

That was what happened to my pompous great-uncle Enoch—he who was painted, long before, over the cat—when on descending from his chamber of a sunny morning, he discovered that owing to an error in eyesight he had dressed an hour earlier than was his custom. He did not know how to employ the extra time, and the contretemps upset him for several days.

He was of kindred calibre with Stephen Bayne, a contemporary prop of Ware society. Stephen, whose proclivities were sporting, rented his mansion to a stranger for the season which he himself had planned to spend at Saratoga. The alien, finding Ware's reception chilly, decamped after a week. When the returning owner was asked to comment on the departure, he said it was not surprising.

"A man of no breadth, like that," said Stephen puffing contemptuously. "Didn't drink, couldn't play billiards—had no resources within himself. No wonder he left a real man's house."

They were gregarious, those old frock-coated fellows, meeting every pleasant afternoon to the number of a baker's dozen or so at Hugh McPhelimy's historic groggery, where they stood and nodded gravely, like sea-cows with toddies in their flippers. Completely creatures of habit and environment, they resented the slightest infraction of their routine, and might have gasped themselves into apoplexy at the suggestion of a shift to a different pool.

Few, to whom the experience has not actually come, can realize how advantageously a sweeping change of Things may be made. We are so stiffly hedged about by a fence of the old picket-saws: Waste Not, Want Not; Look Before You Leap; Old Friends Are Best. Most of the saws are false, and for each a contrary proverb can be found, but we continue to be held in check by them.

Then there are the Sentimentalities to be regarded: All mothers are good; all dogs are faithful; lawyers are wise, physicians skilful, business-men efficient, actors brilliant; these-here United States are the Land of the Free and Home of the Brave, and all denizens have equal opportunities. No foreign country could successfully invade us, so why worry? It is all right for a married couple to live together no matter how they fight, but God always hates the peaceful union unratified by law. All non-Christians are Heathen, etc., etc.

These conventions hold us down, like Gulliver restrained by the million threads of the Lilliputians. We remain in a gloomy, inconvenient, unhealthful house for twenty years because Grandfather built it, and miss a chance to go

to Europe because there would be no one left to take care of Wishbone, the Airdale, if we went. Chicago has the reputation of being noisy, so we refrain from moving there to follow up a business opening.

I once lost all my money and all my friends, and became so sick that I could not stand, into the bargain. To an extent I recommend the catastrophe. Friends that you can lose easily are better lost, and you never know how easily you can lose most of those you have, until you have tried it, or how eagerly they will try to come back, later on. Money is of no service unless you can make more; stagnant, it dies on your hands and rots. Sickness is bad, but during the fight for recovery you learn that medical science advanced about as far as it could in the days of the Moors, and health really depends, in both ways, on what the football coach calls guts.

Plus intelligence. The curse of Things cannot be fought, in any of its phases, with the emotions; it must be educated out. In some individual cases, education is successful. I wonder if it can ever succeed generally. Dreiser evidently thinks not . . . There are the college types. But I know college Idols—speechifiers—who keep libraries for the print and bindings, and the Yale seniors used to laugh, as at an actor's joke, when Sumner said he thought there could be no such thing as long-continued happiness.

Perhaps the majority can never be raised beyond reasonable sanitation and a cessation of paper-strewing in the public parks. Always there must be rules, you can never get discrimina-

tion, recognition of relative values, a sense of proportion. . . Well, the Puritans could never learn that the body of a beautiful woman should be clothed, next to the skin, with the most delicate silks. . . They cannot learn it now. Wasteful economy, mediocrity, bigotry, respectability, the terrible magazines, books, movies, heavy food, quarrels—

Only for the Fortunate the importance of those weights recedes, and death itself seems not to matter much, when the curse of Things is lifted. The man, among those whom I have known, who valued Things the least, and got the most from them, worked busily till he was eighty-five, and died then, unexpectedly, in his sleep without a quiver.



The House

By ARTHUR SYMONS

"Why do you batter down the walls of my house?"

I shouted to one as I stood on the top of my roof.

He stopped his battering and said with an air of reproof:

"I always hated you because you stand aloof,

And because you sit drinking wine in the shadow of the boughs."

At that there arose a clamour of the crows

And all the air was darkened with their wings.

I lifted the wine to my lips in a heavenly drowse.

And then I cast off all thought of material things.

So he that hated the clamour of the crows

Stopped, slept, and left off battering at my house.

A Criminal Trial in the Delta

By DAVID COHN

IT is a Friday afternoon in a tiny village on the Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Railroad in Mississippi. Gathered in the central meeting place of the village—Sanders' general store—are several neighboring planters, Sanders and his two sons, Mr. McGee, a planter, who serves as magistrate of the district, and a deputy sheriff. The men lean or sit on the counters and talk politics, hard times, baseball, the cotton crop, and more enthusiastically, the devastating and withering qualities of the current "white lightning," "white mule," or just plain "corn," as the local moonshine whiskey is called. Beneath the conversation and running through it is an undertone of tension, and the gathering of a slow, fretful impatience. There is to be the trial of a nigger at two o'clock, and the several fat watches reposing in moist, calloused palms indicate that it is twenty minutes past two. The deputy peers anxiously out of the back door of the store in the direction from which the Prosecuting Attorney will come bringing with him the prisoner who has been held in the only secure house of detention for miles around—the Ashville jail, distant fifteen miles.

Suddenly a Ford rattles over a rickety bridge in front of the store and grinds to an abrupt stop. From it emerge the Prosecuting Attorney, a deputy and the prisoner; the latter a middle aged, slender, black negro, handcuffed and dressed in the conventional overalls of the

plantation. The little group of men in the store now come out into the back yard, and the Judge, the Prosecutor and prisoner seat themselves on cracker boxes and Coca-Cola cases placed amid the miscellaneous litter thrown out of the store. Under a cloudless sky and in a musical comedy setting they begin a criminal trial to decide whether a man shall be deprived of his liberty for a space of months, separated from his family and uprooted from the scene of his labor which is now approaching fruition after a half-year of toil.

". . . out of a spirit of revenge one Tobe Hanes did wilfully and maliciously beat and injure said mule."

"Tobe, are you guilty or not guilty?"

"What's dat you say, Boss?"

Patiently and with the quiet understanding of a veteran teacher instructing a hopelessly stupid child, the Prosecutor explains to the negro the character of the crime with which he is charged; that it is his privilege to plead guilty or not guilty and to discharge the witnesses beyond earshot of the proceedings. The prisoner avails himself of this right and pleads not guilty.

The first witness is Mr. Buck Henry, who manages the plantation on which the defendant had been a tenant. Mr. Buck is a small wiry man clad in corduroy trousers and cap and a gray cotton sweater worn loosely over a khaki shirt open at the throat. His gray eyes are kindly and there is about him a simplicity of speech and manner born of long

years spent amid broad fields with tillers of the soil. He seats himself on a cracker box and tells his story in a few words.

"Tobe here came to me about two weeks ago and asked for ten dollars which I refused to give him because there was nothing owing him. Two days later he rode off on one of the mules belonging to the place, and when I heard he had come back I went down to his house to get the mule. The mule's ear was broken and hanging down, deep cuts were all over its back and sides, both eyes were closed, and it was lame and in bad shape generally. I asked Tobe how come the mule's ear was that way and he said he didn't know, and I then took the mule away and had him doctored up. Yes, when Tobe rode off the mule was in first class shape."

A deputy calls loudly for the next witness—Sweetenin Simpson. Sweetenin, a slim, shiny, black boy, shyly comes from around a corner of the store, removes his hat and timidly ventures within the charmed circle of the white folks. He wears a blue cotton shirt and overalls, and as a concession to the gala occasion his feet are shod in tan button shoes above the tops of which his overalls are pulled so that an awed world may gaze upon the splendor of socks cerulean blue. Sweetenin fixes his gaze upon an empty sardine can on the ground and is plainly ill at ease, although a tiny smile about the corner of his mouth shows that he is enjoying the notoriety that springs from being a witness in a criminal trial and from exciting the hopeless envy of the negro spectators who hover on the edge of the gathering.

"Boss, mah right name is Sonny Lindsay but de white folks dey calls me Sweetenin Simpson. White folks, ah sho doan know nuthin 'bout dis case 'cep whut Ah seed an heerd de udder niggers say dat Tobe had done run off on one of Mr. Buck's mules, and had lef his wife and chillun ter pick de crop. Us wus pickin cotton soon one mawnin when us seed Tobe comin back on de critter, an he sho wuz a sight wid his year drappin down lak hit wuz broke an blood all over an stove up a sight. Yassir, las time fo dat dat Ah seed dat mule warn't nuthin ailin him."

Sweetenin rises and grinning broadly retreats until he has merged himself indistinguishably in the group of darky onlookers. From this place of vantage he looks and listens with avidity as a spectator, the while he basks in the sudden and fleeting fame that has come to him as a participant in a local *cause celebre*.

"Tobe," says the Prosecutor, "just tell the Judge here all you know about this mule being in this condition."

For a few minutes Tobe says nothing. He gazes away to the white ribbon of road that stretches to his cabin in the woods, and he sees with unblinking eyes four little black boys, bare of head and feet who are eating little golden heaps of persimmons as they walk along. He looks beyond the boys to the fields white with cotton; cotton soon to be picked by his kind and converted into money for the purchase of circus tickets, gold teeth, Chicago clothing, and unguents possessing the power of making the hair straight and shiny. A cow bell tinkles in a nearby pasture and

the sound seems to awaken Tobe's slumbering mind.

"Boss, Ah aims to tell de troof an nuthin else. Ah'm er ole nigger an bofe white folks an cullud will say dat Tobe Hanes inginerally speaks de troof. Ah did ax Mr. Buck for a loan of ten dollars ter hope buy us some vittles till us had done ginned some cotton and got de seed money. Mr. Buck said dat dare warn't nuthin comin to me and bofe white folks and niggers would have ter do bes dey could twel de money skacity wuz over.

"Naw, Sir, Ah didn't git mad at Mr. Buck wen he tole me dat, but Ah says to mahself, 'Ole nigger you got to git out of here and git somepin ter do.' Den Ah comes on back to mah house, saddles de mule and rides him ter Ashville where Ah works on de streets fer two or three days an den Ah goes over to Mr. Johnson's and hopes him ter chop bushes out de grudge ditches."

"Ah lef fum dare bout midnight aim-in ter git back ter Mr. Buck's fo sun-up an ter do dat Ah had ter cut thoo de swamp."

The white folks gaze at the negro with incredulous eyes and wonder what amazing story of hoodooism will come from his lips. They are sure that he cannot concoct any story that will overcome the weight of testimony against him and await the close of the trial with amused impatience. The Judge asks a trivial question and Tobe resumes his story.

"Seems lak Ah hadn't gone fur an ez Ah wuz ridin' along an warn't payin' no mind ter nuthin' in partickler—jes ridin'—Ah heard somepin crack and fo Ah knowed it er hackberry tree had

done busted off an fell on de mule. Jes ez Ah heered de crackin' Ah whirled 'roun and jumped offen de critter and you could see dar whar a limb er dat tree struck me." (Indicating a slightly blackened spot on a grimy fingernail.)

"Yassir, dat sho is whut hit done. Ef Ah hadn't er jumped off Ah reckon Ah could er got kilt graveyard dead. Sho looks like de good Lawd wuz lookin' out and hopin ole nigger. Yassir, Jedge, Ah sho could show you dat tree out dar in de swamp ef nobody ain't moved hit, an dat is de Lawd's troof how come dat critter ter git hurt."

There are no other witnesses and the Prosecutor makes a short speech in which he comments on the wild improbability of the negro's story, points out a possible motive which led him to beat the mule, and rests the case for the state.

The Judge walks over to inspect the mule which is tethered to a tree a few steps away, and then resumes his seat on the Coca Cola case. He is a fat, kindly, inert man with graying hair and placid brown eyes set shallowly in a broad forehead above a mouth unmagisterial in its obvious quality of indecision. He rakes the ground with a heavy walking cane and glances at the prisoner. Silence descends on the gathering. A negro funeral procession comes into view on the broad road and absorbs the attention of all until it vanishes in the dust and golden haze of the late October afternoon. A mockingbird sings a few vagrant notes from a thorn tree, and a flock of homing blackbirds fly overhead chattering noisily. From a nearby thicket the sharp clear whistle of a partridge falls

upon the ear. It is followed by a sound familiar to all the countryside at dusk—"soo cow"—and soon the creator of the cry comes into view—a little, ragged negro boy, his black breast showing through a tattered shirt. He drives before him a lean milch cow and a yellow cur and he sings as he goes. The setting sun shoots gleaming rays from the windows of the negro church across the road and gilds to gold its opulent display of lightning rods. The darky onlookers are silent as death, save only Pocahontas Johnson who has deserted her supper biscuits and who now ventures an awed whisper into the sable ear of Sonny Vance. The white folks, too, are silent as they speculate upon the severity of the sentence that the Judge will undoubtedly impose.

The eyes of Judge McGee wander away to the woods now deep blue in the rapidly fading light, and come to rest upon the prisoner who sits silently and stoically upon the box, wrapped in the mantle of the strange, impenetrable and inscrutable impassivity of his race. He rakes up little piles of dust with his heavy cane and scatters them again and gathers the dust once more in tiny hills. Then he speaks.

"The evidence in this case, gentlemen, is certainly tolerable peculiar, but I don't believe that this old nigger is lying. Not guilty."

* * * *

Upon hearing the decision of the Court, the negro spectators look pityingly at the man who has been fooled by a plain old cornfield negro who in their opinion was guilty beyond all reasonable doubt. They have little respect for any white man whose mind

could be influenced by such an obviously concocted story, but they are not surprised at the outcome of the trial. It is a familiar phenomenon to them—this spectacle of a guilty member of their race escaping punishment at the hands of lenient white judges who regard the petty crimes of negroes in the manner that they look upon the mischievous acts of wayward children. They leave the scene of the trial which they thoroughly enjoyed as living, pulsing drama in which one of their kind was the leading and most skilful player; a drama which ran smoothly and without hitch to an end foreknown by all of them, and, therefore, supremely satisfying.

The planters and storekeepers, however, are hugely disgusted and they regard the Court's decision as a miscarriage of justice resulting in the freeing of a man who richly deserved punishment. But they do not feel indignant toward the Judge nor incensed at the defendant. Their daily relations with plantation negroes and their almost daily condoning and forgiving of slight offenses committed by their field workers make them very tolerant of the shortcomings of the blacks. To their minds their tenants and employees are merely adults without the powers of inhibition and resistance possessed by adults of other races—men and women whose ideas of right and wrong are very hazy in respect to the lesser crimes and misdemeanors. Every negro knows that it is wrong to kill a human being, but how many think that it is wrong to "tote" food from the white folk's kitchen, "toting" being a recognized form of graft? The planters forgive these people as one forgives a little boy

for stealing a handful of plums or titude of the white men who live in smashing a toy train in a moment of close touch with the rural negro: petulance and childish anger.

“Well, what can you do with a nigger?”
Mr. Sanders pithily sums up the at-



A Limousine Passes

By MARY CARMACK McDOUGAL

There was hell-for-two in the longglistening gray limousine which rolled past the corner where ordinary people waited for their street cars.

A woman who stood there figuring on whether to buy a new rug for the dining-room, and make the old curtains do, or to buy new curtains and make the old rug do; saw only a big car with a man and woman in the back seat.

“They have a cylinder missing,” thought the dark, unshaven man on the curb. “I wonder if their stupid-looking chauffeur knows it.”

“What a dear veil that rich girl has on,” a waitress who was all yellow angles, said to herself. And she fell to wondering how John would like her with one done so, under her chin.

“The young man does not look happy,” thought the woman in black.

“Gee, ain’t that a peach of a car!” shrilled the freckled boy to his companion. “I’ll soon have enough money saved up to get that motor wheel for my bicycle. Then won’t I show them some speed!”

The short, square-jawed chap carrying the fat sample case threw back his shoulders with the determination: “My little wifie is going to have an auto like that some day, by George!”

“Them swells ride around in their cars when other folks are starving. I’d like to smash that glass in their faces,” was the thought that struck through the mind of the man in the shabby slouch hat.

The sun flung itself against the polished body of the long car, and flashed dazzlingly back past a baby held by a tired woman. It blinked and chuckled and grabbed after the light with faty creased hands.

And in the gray limousine as it rolled by, sat the man and woman in their own little upholstered hell-for-two.

The Ecstasy

By HANIEL LONG

THE mask is one form of release, of ecstasy; it makes one strange to oneself. Among the forms of ecstasy none is more highly spoken of than nakedness and moonlight; and it was this thought which crossed Rainaldo's mind as, carefully masked, he stepped naked into the night. At the same moment in her father's garden not a mile away, Isotta, unmasked, and in a gown of silver, was flaunting her slenderness in the face of a rising moon. But Isotta did it without reflecting; she liked to steal out to the olive trees in the dark silence, and dream of death.

Isotta was a village girl, but she was not without access to large truths and larger emotions, and she had concluded that adoration and death are the only realities. As for Rainaldo, he was at this time very young; but he had dreams, he believed in belomancy. Like the king of Babylon he made his arrows bright, and on this occasion he was off to try the omens as to his future.

The young cavalier took his stand by the oak tree which marks the southern apex of his hereditary estate; and there, having made obeisance to the moon, he recited the ritual prescribed in the black art of belomancy.

"I am not the Marchese di Cavelli, I am not the son of a Christian mother; I am a follower of shadows, a creature of the night! I am the offspring of Hunger and Thirst, the child of Destruction. I stride across mountains; the plains are but dust for my chariot. I

slay where and whom I will; I go about ravishing and I pillage without quarter. The presences of the night support me; behold, I shoot my arrows once, twice and three times, and damned be he who comes between me and the revelation."

When the third arrow had left the argent bow, Rainaldo made obeisance to the moon again, and then with the hot speed of those who, having acknowledged the supernatural, expect the supernatural to acknowledge them, he set off in pursuit of omens. He had sent his bolts down over the crest of the hill, aiming them carefully between the squat darknesses of two oaks, as between two terrors. For the young man had walked abroad too often in the night not to be affected by moonlit trees; he had indeed written a monograph on the ghostly cypress. And to-night, even had he left the villa sane, he could not fail to mark a tremor which ran through and through the citadel of sanity at sight of the mystic oaks.

He found the first arrow in a clear space above the olive orchard. It had struck against a rock and had shivered to pieces. Rainaldo threw his hand to his forehead and hurried on. The second arrow had pierced an olive tree some seven inches from the ground, and at an angle, as he calculated by his circles, of thirty-seven degrees. It was something. He noted the reverse direction of the arrow; the straight thread of space led him to a particularly bright star at some distance below the Cross. Could it be Venus? From Venus to

the heart of an olive tree at thirty-seven degrees! It was a dubious enterprise.

But where was the third arrow? He passed and repassed the path into the orchard, walking a few steps in either direction; but he could not espy it. Peering with a start at a gnarled and ancient bush, he beheld what he had not expected, a white shape. Was it a ghost? Was it a girl? It was a girl, as real there in the shadow as white thunder in piled clouds. Her black hair hung over her shoulders, and she seemed suspended in a trance.

Rainaldo, trembling, drew near. She gazed at him; she was beautiful. And forgetting that he was masked, and therefore, not a particular young man but any young man at all; and, forgetting, too, that by his ritual he had pronounced himself a beast and king of beasts, Rainaldo, with a moan, fell down on his knees three paces from her, and pressed his forehead into the ground.

Who knows why the most resolute barbarians falter when face to face with the unearthly? It is a thing to be charged against Beauty that she breaks our will. The brute bends to the beautiful, and that is the end of the brute. Yet Rainaldo was not engaged in reflection. He enjoyed no discourse, whether of reason or of madness, for he had forgotten the night, the missing arrow, *belomancy* and himself. He was transported to the bosom of a cloud, and the cloud moved and lived and was the heart of life.

Then the maiden spoke. "Why have you slain me?" Her low voice contained no reproach; it was merely wonder, as caressing the silver arrow

in her side, she slipped to her knees and fell lengthwise upon the earth.

Rainaldo was appalled. Whatever vague and criminal notions might have been his as he shot the third arrow into the silver night, he had never dreamt of its piercing a maiden's side. Then that was what it all came to, the arduous pursuit of magic.

It is proverbial that the mothers of boys who practise *belomancy* are endowed by nature with what is known as second sight. Rainaldo had always viewed this trait in his mother with distaste, for what is the pleasure of being near a person who reads your thoughts like a book, and forecasts every day of your life? Yet now beside a dead girl in the moonlight, he thought of his mother with intolerable relief.

He dared not pluck the arrow from the girl's side, for fear her life should follow it; a dead girl may be restored to life, but not if blood has been shed. The young man gathered her in his arms, and retraced his steps up the hill. Three times on the journey to the villa he paused to rest; and each time he gazed in agony at what he bore. When he had arrived in his own chamber, he deposited his precious burden on the magian couch, drawing about the maiden a triple circle thrice.

This done, he hastened to his mother. The aged woman, starting from sleep, and beholding her son come naked and masked into her chamber, sat up in bed to learn what was amiss.

Rainaldo beckoned her in agitation. She threw about her shoulders a heavy robe.

"There is poetry in the world," muttered the dame, as she followed him un-

certainly, "and there is also prose. It is poetry to lie asleep in the dead of night; it is prose to be rudely awakened. There is sense in the world; there is also nonsense. We shall see!"

The corridor traversed, they entered the room of the magian couch. The Marchesa gazed at the silent form.

"Did you think you had to do it?" she inquired, turning to her son.

Rainaldo struck his forehead with his palms.

"Fetch me a glass of water," said his mother.

No sooner had he gone than the Marchesa took the girl's hand and said to her, "What does this mean, child?"

Isotta replied, without moving her lips, "I love him and he has slain me."

"He has slain you only metaphorically," said the Marchesa, kindly. "This is the result of too much belomancy."

The maiden lay still as death, her eyelids heavy.

The Marchesa murmured, "It is a question, whether these aimless practices have not too much glamor. Even figures of speech are dangerous."

"What matter, if I am slain?" sighed the girl.

"Tut, child. To live, to die, to live again, these are but empty words."

"And is he to go on living?"

"Ah, not at all. He shall die."

"By the same arrow?"

"By the same arrow."

Rainaldo, who had returned to the chamber, paled a little at these words. "Is it necessary?" he inquired, running his hand through his hair.

"Altogether so," replied the Marchesa, signing her son to recline beside Isotta.

The Marchesa went to a secret panel in the wall, and took from a shelf a large parchment volume.

"She knows even my secret shelves," sighed her son.

After referring to the index, the dame opened the volume to a certain page. She adjusted her spectacles. The directions for son-slaying were evidently not clear. The Marchesa went through them in pantomime. First, you took the silver arrow from the side of the damsel; then you tripled the circle thrice about the son; then you plunged the arrow through his heart.

"You should have slain yourself," grumbled the Marchesa to Rainaldo.

But Rainaldo was pale and rigid, a shape sepulchral as the maiden. His mother hastened the ritual; and in a moment Rainaldo likewise was slain, and shared the beautiful and eloquent silence of Isotta.

"He wore a mask, died, and passed to the mysterious regions of the inner world," murmured the Marchesa.

She restored the book to its place; and returning to the couch, tied a mask of pale rose over the face of Isotta. This accomplished, she removed her spectacles, and sank into a seat.

"Isotta fell in love with a masked figure," she said to herself. "That is, she fell in love with abstract youth. It is a quaint idea. Rainaldo must fall in love with Isotta masked, with abstract youth likewise. Such is the first mystery."

"It is strange how cold these August nights are."

"When they are tired of being slain, they will rise and move about and unmask, and begin to love each other

as Rainaldo and Isotta, instead of as two emanations of youth. Such is the second mystery.

"These August nights are very cool.

"When they are tired of loving each other as Rainaldo and Isotta, they will discover that the face itself is but a mask, and find reality in each other's eyes. How very philosophical everything is! But I must go back to bed."

The sound of the Marchesa's foot-

steps died away down the corridor. Rainaldo turned to Isotta, and said, "The first and third mysteries are eternal, being Nature and God; the second is mortal, being man, and lives only in the present."

"Where is the present?" inquired Isotta, removing her lover's mask.

"It is yonder in the moonlight," said Rainaldo, leaping up and pointing towards the open door.



A Ballad of Worldly Wise

By JOHN McCLURE

"Where now are those brave kings of old
That walked in purple and spun gold?
Ay, where now, tell me then, is that
King of the Jews, Jehosephat?"

"Whist, lad! He is as far from home
As Julius Caesar, the King o'Rome,
Perhaps in the same coign of hell
With that mad Frenchman, Charles Martel.
They have the selfsame pathway trod
With Pontius Pilate, that killed God."

"And Tamburlaine, and Greek Scamander,
Artaxerxes, Alexander?"

"They have vanished, bone and limb,
Every glory, every whim,
All confounded, one by one,
Into kind oblivion.
Every glory, every whim,
Every crown and diadem,
Every king that flaunteth them,
Death he taketh unto him."

Frank Harris

By H. C. AUER, Jr.

DURING my first year in college, one of my instructors read "An English Saint" to the class, from a volume of stories called "Unpath'd Waters." The story appealed to me so intensely, that I read "Montes the Matador," and "Elder Conklin," and later, "The Veils of Isis." But I had not exhausted Frank Harris, there were two books on Shakespeare and a play, and other stories; three novels, and a biography. I wanted to learn something about this man who wrote plays, and novels and stories, touching them all with high and low shadows. There was a paragraph in "Who's Who in America" and a slightly longer comment in the English edition, but there was no biography, no sketch of the writer who had done so much for our national letters.

Several years later, I came upon two books in the New York public library, a little brochure by Temple Scott, filled with the kind of praise one finds in publishers' announcements and a bound volume of the *Forum*, with a long review of Frank Harris' first series of "Contemporary Portraits" and a portrait of the author, dexterously drawn by the editor, Michael Monahan. In a more recent book, "Set Down in Malice," Gerald Cumberland chats, delightfully, about Harris in one of a number of uniformly excellent chapters on living writers. But it remains for some neophyte, perhaps, to do the great biography, and it will be done, we may be

sure of that—unless Frank carries out the threat to write his own story. What an autobiography it would be! written—assuredly, in Paris, and with the background of a thousand memories!

During the war, little was heard of Harris, except through the pages of his magazine. Malice and prejudice wear themselves out, eventually, and Frank Harris is gradually coming into his own.

I received a letter from H. L. Mencken, a few days ago, concluding with the following paragraph: "For Harris, I have a high respect. His *Wilde* is a superb piece of work. All the opposition to him is grounded on the fact that he saw the dishonesty of the statement of England's war aims from the start and openly denounced it. No sane man believes in it now. But the super-patriots and Anglomaniacs hate him for having exposed their folly." Bruno's "Review" published an interesting story about Harris, which was reprinted, with an introductory comment, in the Sunday magazine section of the *Detroit Free Press*, under the caption: "Frank Harris, Unappreciated."

A recent number of the Saturday book page, of the *Detroit Daily Times*, contained a sketch of a memorable evening, which I enjoyed with Mr. Harris in his home. I shall never forget his impersonation of Burleson, then power

of powers in Washington. When the bent shoulders straightened and the squeaky voice resumed its mellow quality, the spirit of "the King's minister" had gone, and Mrs. Harris turned to me and said: "Wouldn't Frank have made a splendid actor?" Mrs. Harris had been a talented actress and knew her art.

Reviews of "A Mad Love," his latest work, have appeared in Detroit papers, in the *Stepladder Magazine* (Bookfellows) and in a recent issue of Llewellyn Jones' Friday Literary Page in the Chicago *Evening Post*. A review in the Detroit *Times* brought the following letter to my desk: "My dear Auer: Your review is excellent and kindly, but the chief point is missed in it. I tried to say new things about music. Did I do it? Bernard Shaw says the music part of the story is splendid, but the love part mere romantic piffle."

A supplementary notice of the book was printed in the next issue of "Reading and Writing," with an "impertinent" letter from Lee Smits, urging the Editor of *Pearson's* to give up the magazine for *creative writing*. I think that such a passage as this is worth reprinting: "I have just finished 'Montes' again and have been carried back to the days when I first read 'The Bomb', which left an impression deeper than that produced by any novel since . . . I do not say that 'The Bomb' is greater than anything Conrad ever wrote. . . I *only know* that it LIVES more vividly in my memory than any other work of fiction. . . I suspect that you are a missionary, filled with the noble illusion that your voice crying in the wilderness can help to improve conditions of life

in this 'rat-pit' world."—Lee J. Smits.

Intimate glimpses may be had of men through their letters, and among those, from Harris, recently, is one which is particularly chatty and interesting.

40 7th Avenue,
April 7, 1921.

"My dear Auer:

"Your letter came as wine to me, and I get very little wine whether for the spirit or the body in these sad days.

"You tell me four of my stories are masterpieces, but you leave out 'Magic Glasses' that Arnold Bennett and Wells thought my best, and 'Mr. Jacob's Philosophy,' that I have a great liking for. However, that matters little. . . No, I have not read 'Joan and Peter.' Since the war fever attacked him, Wells has done nothing good it seems to me. Of course, I know Edgar Jepson. I used to like him very much; used him once as assistant on 'Vanity Fair' when I went to America. I put him in my place and had a strange experience, which I will tell you about, sometime. He has brain ability but no heart.

"I have not read 'Main Street,' but I know Sinclair Lewis, and know that he will never do anything big. You have mentioned 'McTeague.' Frank Norris' 'Octopus' is the only epic, America has produced and his 'Pit' is also good. Of course, I am sending you 'A Mad Love' and 'Elder Conklin' also.

"By the way, I wish you would nail this Heywood Broun to the cross (I enclose clippings). The London *Times* gave three columns to the 'Contemporary Portraits' in the *one issue*, although it is published in America and there were no advertising strings attached,

and the *Times* also had a screed about it as one of the Books of the Week. Heywood Broun writes like a tenth-rate university professor and treats me as if I were negligible.

“Thanks for showing me what Chesterton said! I am not sure that he is a great man, but he is very interesting. Most sincerely,
“FRANK HARRIS.”



The Railroad Station

By JEANNETTE MARKS

A station is a place of miracle:
 So many trains passing and repassing,
 So many thoughts coming and going,
 So many greetings and farewells!
 Any surprise might happen there:
 God come and go,
 Street cries turn to stars,
 Dust of blown rubbish whirl to aureole!
 Thus, in such a place,
 Love met me once.
 That day the shining tracks seemed leaping toward eternity,
 And we heard the street cries sing like stars,
 And we saw God come and go
 And the dust upon our hair was gold!

Now, blinded, I look past all I see:
 It might happen,
 Love might be there again!
 It's not that I think a railroad station heaven.
 Who does!
 Yet so many greetings and farewells,—
 Anything might happen!
 Have you not felt that way,
 And, bewildered, watched;
 And, longing, waited?

Little Tales of Mexico

No. 1. *How Felipé Looked Out of a Window*

By VINCENT STARRETT

THROUGHOUT the turmoil incident to the late unpleasantness in Mexico, which replaced the idealistic carnage of the dreamer Madero with the less alturistic, but no less carmine, slaughter of the soldier Huerta, business in the City fell off enormously. Every encouragement was given the populace to continue in the habit of daily purchase, and many of the smaller shops conducted a brisk, although guarded activity behind the dubious shelter of shuttered windows.

While the occasion was one of death, the undertakers did not benefit by the change. In the circumstances, a solicitation of patronage might have savored of impertinence. So the unhappy dead were allowed to remain quiescent where they fell, until it occurred to the government of the moment to remove them in tumbrils, and place them together in a remote spot out of the way of marching troops, whose movements must not be obstructed.

Thus, although the Indian mortality rate was high, little profit accrued to the undertakers. When an occasional American or Briton had the misfortune to wander into the line of fire in the streets, an enterprising firm of American or British embalmers was sure to be awarded the burial contract, and the native artist was left to whistle moodily in his studio, with a whole streetful of prospective business outside his door. It was a discouraging episode, the whole ten days of destruction, and the native

undertakers shook their honest heads and longed for a return of that unaccustomed but delightful peace, when Indians drank themselves to death on *mescal* or *pulque*, and were decently buried.

In the neat shop of Gabriel Urueta, in the *Calle Zamora*, this skilful workman was listening to bad news. Slinking into his place of business that morning, he had become involved with a band of government soldiers, who, with characteristic zeal and execrable marksmanship, had shot away one of Gabriel's fingers before they could be convinced that the undertaker was of the right side. In this pass, with only one assitant, Gabriel Urueta had reached his office to learn that his assistant was about to leave him without help at all. In the unlikely event of a "case", he would be in the devil's own fix, what with his bandaged hand and only his wife to aid him.

"Señor Moran is rushed, and is willing to pay well for expert assistance," said Felipé Rodriguez, as he tendered his resignation.

"Señor Moran may go to the Barbadoes!" retorted Gabriel Urueta. "He has stolen all the business in the City, and now he steals my best assistant."

This last was a diplomatic stroke, for Felipé was Gabriel Urueta's *only* assistant.

"Can I help it?" demanded the assistant, with an air of martyrdom. He will pay fifteen pesos a day!"

It was a munificent wage. The undertaker knew it.

"I shall not pay you for two days this week," he declared, at length. "You should have told me you were leaving."

"I did not know."

"It is no matter. I shall not pay you."

Felipé's face twitched with sudden passion. His countenance was suddenly that of a cat. Had he possessed a tail, it would have switched viciously from side to side. His moustache bristled.

"If you will come back when Señor Moran is not so busy," relented Gabriel Urueta, "I shall pay you, and you shall be my asistant again."

Good assistants were scarce.

"I shall never enter your place again!" savagely observed Felipé.

He strode angrily to the door, but paused with an apprehensive jump, as a renewal of firing sounded in the next square.

"Who will dress my windows?" wailed the undertaker, in despair.

Felipé was also his best window-dresser. No other so cunningly could arrange the tawdry satin folds in the cheap white caskets that adorned the windows of Gabriel Urueta.

"I do not care!" recklessly said the departing window dresser.

"You shall dress them!" screamed Gabriel Urueta. "You shall come back, in a day or two, Felipé, and I shall pay you six pesos a day. I cannot lose my best window dresser."

"I shall never dress your windows again," declared Felipé, opening the door.

"You shall be my asistant, and you shall dress my windows," shrieked the undertaker at the retreating back of the assistant, "or the day will come soon

when I shall bury you in your own window display!"

With this elaborate promise, Gabriel Urueta returned to the rear of his darkened shop, and resumed his morose meditation. He was deeply put out by Felipé's desertion, for Felipé was also an excellent mourner in the homes of those unfortunates who brought their dead to his shop.

The versatile Felipé took over his new duties with his usual cheerful ardor. He whistled joyfully at his tasks, and, as long as he was inside four walls, was in no wise disturbed by the rattle of machine guns in the neighboring streets.. Long association with the dead, Felipé felt, had made him view death in its proper perspective. The prospect of being himself rendered dead, in a quarrel which, as a peace-loving man, he was beginning to dislike, was not sufficiently alluring, however, to make him incautious in his journeys to and from the shop of Señor Moran.

For the most part, the fighting now was in the other end of town, but stray parties of assassins still patrolled the nearby streets with careless rifles; murder was still a pastime of the many. Felipé had been known to crawl across a street on his stomach, when occasion had seemed to demand it, literally interpreting an ancient aphorism concerning the travel of armies.

It occurred to Felipé, during the *siesta* hour, some days after his departure from the shop of Gabriel Urueta, to look in upon that forlorn tradesman. Not to cross his threshold, for he had sworn never again to do that; but to glance through the windows, per-

haps, if the shutters happened to be unbarred, and to place his thumb obscenely to his nose. This would be sure to infuriate Gabriel Urueta, and would be a source of happiness to Felipé Rodríguez.

He noted, as he moved through the streets, that Gabriel's shop again had become a suburb of the battle zone. Fantastic groups of lifeless Indians decorated important street intersections, and at one point he observed that a horse had charged half through a shop window before yielding up its spirit. The animal's hind legs, hoofs rigidly lifted, grotesquely protruded from the jagged aperture. In a doorway, two soldiers lay with their heads together, in the fashion of men whispering boisterous stories. They might have been engaged in some such earnest discourse, had they not been dead. Felipé passed then with a theatrical shrug, although a prickling sensation in his spine was not entirely an item in his daily emotions.

As he entered the *Calle Zamora*, a spattering rifle fire broke out behind him. Unwilling to figure in any fatalities that might follow the outburst, Felipé ran quickly forward and collapsed, breathing hard, behind a post before the door of Gabriel Urueta. Looking up, he saw his erstwhile employer in the doorway. The undertaker's eyes were upon him.

"Come in, quick!" called Gabriel Urueta.

Felipé grinned insultingly.

"I shall never enter your place again, nor dress your windows!" he said, and

placed his thumb to his nose.

A spasm of rage crossed the face of Gabriel Urueta. He began a colorful response, then turned and fled swiftly within. The undertaker's door crashed shut in the face of a rabble of soldiers who ran in from the street. A brief medley of pistol shots sounded against the panels. Then a picturesque rufian, with a stolen automatic, laughingly leaned over the prostrate Felipé, and shot him through the face.

Fortunately, Felipé was already dead. He had died of fright a moment before.

When a respite of darkness had fallen over the city, Gabriel Urueta, not without tears, emerged from his retreat and dragged the body of his former pupil and window dresser across the threshold; and in the morning the face of Felipé Rodríguez, astonishingly lifelike, looked stonily at chance passersby out of the window of the undertaker's shop, from the tawdry satin folds in the cheap white casket that had been his dearest care.

As the coffin was set up on end, and braced against the back partition, Felipé had an excellent view of all that went forward, and for several days he served to advertise the skill of Gabriel Urueta in a thankless profession.

So that, while Felipé broke a promise, Gabriel Urueta kept several; for Felipé had come back and had crossed his threshold; and now he dressed the undertaker's window, from which shortly he was to be buried in his own window display.

To Arms! Burgundians!

By BENJAMIN DE CASSERES

THAT blessed word Mesopotamia may never have a successor. The old lady who went to church only to hear the young parson roll it off must have got some mystical connotations out of those syllables. It was, maybe, like the long roll of a drum in her soul; and a drum can awaken the deepest recesses of the soul without evoking a single image. Napoleon had drummers everywhere in his armies, and he kept them hammering away night and day, because, he said, the drum drove out thought.

It may be the same with "Mesopotamia"; theologians keep repeating it because it thrills and stifles thought.

Now, after reading Romain Rolland's great book, "Colas Breugnon, Burgundian," I find myself haunted by that word of the sub-title, "Burgundian!" I will confess that I bought it because of the word "Burgundian", with the great basso-profundo note.

Burgundian! Burgundian! I repeated walking the streets.

Burgundian! Burgundian! I said like a prayer before I put on my nightie.

Burgundian! Burgundian! resounded like a giant, half-muffled alarm clock in my brain when I opened my eyes in the morning.

I am a Burgundian; thou art a Burgundian; he is a Burgundian, I kept conjugating on my way to the book store.

And when I faced the salesman and boomed into his face that my need was

"Colas Breugnon, BURGUNDIAN," I felt that I was in the same beatified condition as the old lady who, when she died, was taken by St. Peter to the edge of the universe and shown in all its glory the blessed word Mesopotamia become a glorious spiritual panorama.

Was it because Burgundy has always been my best beloved wine or because I am a born logocrat, loving beautifully sounding words more than money or immortality, or because my philosophical and poetic oracles told me that in that word I should find the final and best philosophy of life?

My reactions to the word are masculine, epicurean, pagan. "Burgundian" conjured out of my inflammable imagination Falstaff and Anacreon, Omar Khayyam and Aristophanes, Erasmus and Anatole France, Goethe and Rabelais, the "Beautiful Blue Danube" and Chesterton, Tartarin of Tarascon and Petronius, the Abbé Coignard and the "Second Hungarian Rhapsody," "Tyl Eulenspiegel" and Michel de Montaigne, James Branch Cabell and the Boul' Mich'—all locked up in a luscious cluster of cerebral grapes suddenly squashed on my parched gullet, wherefrom ran rich red wine beyond the reach of federal inspectors.

The tremendous import of the word Burgundian, which has slipped so suddenly on the woosack of my interior parliament of images, maybe a reaction from the unburgundian environment in which we find ourselves to-

day on this side of the Statue of Liberty.

The suppressed thirst in this alcoholic Cimmeria in which we are living may have woven on my curtain of darkness the mirage of Burgundian cities, Burgundian faces, Burgundian smiles, Burgundian feasts and Burgundian scepticism, or may have been evoked by the impish Prosperos at the base of my joyously transgressing nature.

In "Colas Breugnon, Burgundian," Roumain Rolland has created one of the greatest characters of all time framed in one of the most beautiful and stimulating books ever written. He is the laughing Job. It is a book for brave men and sick people, and comes in the nick of time, when the face of the world is long and its asses' ears longer.

Colas, the old winesack of a Burgundian, triumphs over all the ills of life by submitting to them. When Medusa peeps over the fence of his garden he takes another bumper and hurls a cabbage at her ridiculous head. When the soldiers invade his house he sits in the wine cellar with them. Plague and death and riot have no power over his Aristophanic grin, for Colas Breugnon, Burgundian, is an aristocrat; that is, a being who lives himself both wisely and well, loves himself to the point where his love overflows and inundates all the world. He guzzles his days, his books, his emotional and mental experiences like a mighty Pan.

Life is good because it is an adventure. He is superman of the stomach, and his scepticism about all things is the flower of a profoundly religious nature. He is a pantheist, although he never uses the word. He might paraphrase Descartes by saying, I live; therefore, God is good.

He flows with life. He is too wise to say Nay to disaster. Satan has no power over that giant guffaw and that great wine-soaked nose, and that mouth that says simultaneously "Hurrah!" and "Bosh!" to everything.

* * *

After reading this great book—a veritable bible of earthly wisdom spilled out of the heart of that mighty France—I feel like dividing the human race into Burgundians and Cimmerians.

The Burgundian spirit is the spirit of an eternal renaissance, of easy-going, the spirit of Henley's "Invictus." To be a Burgundian is to be confederate to the Great Jest, to pal in with Fatality, to utter with Goethe each day, "The secret of life is life itself." It is good because I'm here.

The Cimmerians we know. No need to psycho-analyze them. They are the salt of the earth and much dry wisdom is with 'em. Their ways they are dark and their tricks are not vain, the same which I'm not going to rise to explain.

Evoo! Colas Breugnon, Burgundian! The youth of the world salute you!



There is no place so high that an ass laden with gold cannot reach it.—
Rojas.

The Verdict

By CARMELITE JANVIER

I watch my balloon
For it is a thing of beauty
Floating in the air;
Now scintillating and gorgeous in the sun light,
Now dipping and swaying into the shadow,
Always free and colorful and buoyant—
Wonderously buoyant!
You speak. . .
And a fragment of soiled and crumpled rubber
Lies in the dust.



Dunsany—After the Tales

By NOEL STRAUS

At word of thine, the portals of Romance
Swing lightly back, disclosing to our gaze
Enchanted realms of beauty past all praise.
There ancient gods and warriors wield the lance;
And maidens swiftly wake to love, and dance
In red-gold courts of palaces, ablaze
With amethyst and pearl and chrysoprase.
New marvels we behold at every glance.
Thou lead'st beyond the ultimate star that burns,
To gleaming cities hung in dazzling light;
Or unto woods in distant, dim domains,
The lairs of slinking beasts aprowl at night,
Where foaming rivers, swollen with ceaseless rains,
Leap into tragic seas whence none returns.

Starrett's Chicago Letter

CHICAGO'S "local color" popularly is believed to be just a shade less gray than that of Pittsburgh; its "atmosphere" a blanket of Stygian odor, by-product of the packing industry! its thoroughfares sacred to commercialism and crime. The city's reputation is not entirely founded upon legend, nor is it undeserved; yet in intervals of loathing the place, one finds much to recommend it. It is not unbeautiful, and in its swarming streets there is much to interest and entertain. The variety of its life is extraordinary. Not even London, I believe, can offer so many studies in contemporaneous contrast. That 99 per cent of its citizens have never really seen Chicago, of course, goes without saying.

The outstanding sights of the city are recorded in guide books; the quieter and vastly more satisfying views are of accidental meeting. With the coming of spring and summer, I have resumed my "little journeys," and on the old North Side have revisited a number of delightful glimpses.

From the window of a Northwestern elevated train, rushing past Orleans street, I sense a fascinating "old world" atmosphere about St. Joseph's Priory; just a glimpse of a still and peaceful courtyard enclosed behind high towered walls that cast deep shadows on the grass. A fountain plays over bright fish (goldfish, no doubt) in a sunken pool, edged with flowers; and at the sunset hour black-froked priests pace with meditative steps the encircling

walk. For a moment something stirs in the silence of the soul, and the world rolls back a thousand years; then we are past, and the unending panorama of housetops and porches begins again. Around me, busy office folk are deeply engrossed with their newspapers. They have not noticed. Perhaps they are wishing for time or money to journey in far countries.

Not far away, quaint little cottages with white porcelain door knobs make it almost ends in the broad back elevation of Christ Church, then queerly changes its mind and curves into a narrow by-way around to aristocratic La Salle.

The great gray mass of the Newberry Library bulks beyond the trees of Walton Square. Among its treasures are Latin breviaries, and Sanskrit volumes with copper leaves, and an illuminated manuscript roll of the Bhagavad Ghita. And as one rests in the square, through the trees threads a silver chiming of bells from some neighboring temple, lost at length in the whirl of electrics, the purr of limousines, and the chugging of Fords in the avenue beyond . . . After all, it is the twentieth century.

* * *

Apropos of this sort of adventure: it was Balzac, was it not, who collected his realism by following people in the street and listening to their remarks? The only trouble with this ingenious system of eavesdropping is that the results are likely to be fragmentary and unsatisfying. One catches an intriguing sen-

tence and presses closer . . . but the crowd heaves and ripples, the interval widens and the sequel is gone forever.

The most extraordinary fragment that ever drifted to me out of Babel came to my ears in the crowded aisle of a State street department store. A protesting citizen, haggard and three-parts mad, was being propelled through the throng by his wife (the relationship was painfully evident) toward the lunch room. As he lurched past with the rabble, over his shoulder he flung back a desperate cry: "*I ain't goin' to eat one of them things!*"

Ships that pass in the night! Time and again, I have tried to guess the object of his aversion, but in all the world of edibles there is nothing that seems quite to merit the combined fury and despair of his utterance.

* * *

Anthony M. Rud is a writer of short stories for the popular magazine. He is also a neighbor of mine, and the son of my doctor. I had never met the son, but believing it the duty of a veteran of letters to encourage beginners with friendly criticism and applause, I set out to call upon this young man. A maid met me at the front door, and informed me that Mr. Rud was spending the winter in Florida with his family, and had not yet returned! That is the end of the story, except that I am still wondering how this sort of thing is done, for it costs money to spend the winter in Florida, and I, too, am a writer.

* * *

Burton Rascoe has gone east, and is now managing editor of *McCall's Magazine*. I believe him to be the best literary critic in America. What he will do

with a woman's journal is an engaging mystery. By all signs, *McCall's* should begin to be important from now on.

* * *

Among recent additions to the Bookfellow's membership rolls are President Harding, Mrs. Jack London, Carl Sandburg, Theodore Maynard, William Griffith, Bruce Barton, Lew Sarett and Herbert Quick. This notable group adds stature to the Order, and suggests that shortly the Bookfellow's will be an organization with which publishers will do well to reckon. The membership is approaching the 1300 mark, as I write, and 1300 persons who know what they want in literature can pretty nearly get it. Heretofore, the Order has published its volumes in limited editions. Before long, it will seek a wider clientele, and there will be some lively competition.

* * *

Charles H. Dennis, managing editor of the *Daily News*, has been contributing occasional entertaining articles on Eugene Field to the columns of his paper; memories of the Field he intimately knew. Frequently the *News* gathers up its special articles and offers the public a valuable booklet. It is to be hoped it will do so with these Field papers.

* * *

George Meek, the author-bath-chairman, is dead at Eastbourne, after a life of illness, disappointment and general unhappiness. Toward the end he was shockingly poor, and had been all but cut to pieces by surgeons. He lived on about \$3.25 a week, as I figure English money, and there was a family! A few months ago, a little group in Chicago,

hearing of his difficulties, was able to ease the situation a trifle, but nothing could save Meek. His book, now almost forgotten, was an important addition to that literary shelf labeled "human documents." H. G. Wells wrote the introduction; but I believe Meek never made much by it . . . What is it that the Meek are to inherit?

* * *

With the death of "B. L. T.," the famous "Line-O'-Type" column of the *Tribune* tottered and seemed about to fall; but a new conductor has been procured, who with innumerable "contrihs," manages to produce a daily column. Meanwhile, the enterprising *Post* has swung into the game, and started a column of its own, thinking to profit by the defection of *Tribune* contributors. To some extent, it has done so; but both columns flourish less brilliantly than did Taylor's. Perhaps the best column in the country, just now, is Keith Preston's "Periscope" every Wednesday on the *Daily News* book page.

* * *

My private bureau of information in London reports that "Joan Sutherland" (Mrs. Richard Kelly), the English author, shortly is to visit America on a copy-seeking tour. . . . Meanwhile, a number of our Chicago writers are seeking other lands in search of the elusive "word." Mary Hastings Bradley, who writes popular, sentimental thrillers, is said to be off for Africa, while others are booked for Europe.

* * *

The antiquarian book shops continue to cry for copies of "Jurgen" and "Painted Veils," and some astonishing prices are being offered and asked for

these *opi*. The former work is still a topic of conversation, and promises to become as standard a subject as crops and the weather. Many persons, having read "Jurgen," sing its praises with tireless and tiresome monotony, their panegyrics offering complete evidence of their failure to understand so much as half of what they have read; others, reading with partial understanding, speak of it with a knowing air and an occasional furtive wink, and manifestly regard it as the greatest masterpiece of a kind since "Fanny Hill." Some thousands of excellent persons, who have read not a line of it, blush at mention of the pawnbroker's name. A comparative few have read the book with entire understanding and complete appreciation, and these render their opinion only when it is asked. But booksellers will pay \$20 for a first edition, and will ask \$35 for it.

* * *

Cartoons Magazine, a distinctly Chicago journal with a national reputation, will begin a change of policy with the next (July) issue, when it will appear as "Cartoons and Wayside Tales." It offers a market for first-class fiction, and, in time, will become exclusively a literary journal, as "Wayside Tales." For a few months, however, it will retain a number of the old "Cartoons" features. Thomas C. O'Donnell is Editor, and H. H. Windsor is publisher. The editorial offices are in the Tower Building.

* * *

In "Jake" Eunice Tietjens appears to have written a fine novel of the new, abbreviated school. In 200 pages, she has accomplished a finely moving and

human work, and the best critics, including myself, are saying complimentary things about it. Boni & Liveright published the book, which is attractively issued. Eunice Tietjens already has wide celebrity as a poet. She does not publish often; rather, she works care-

fully, and publishes when she has something to say. She is the wife of Cloyd Head, the poet-dramatist.

* * *

For the rest, your correspondent has Spring fever.

VINCENT STARRETT.

* * *

The Wind

By OSCAR WILLIAMS

I have known the wind
 In a strange, dim place
 Like a cool pillow
 Against my face.

I have felt the wind
 When the day was fair,
 As I ran my fingers
 Through his elfin hair.

I have heard the wind
 Sounding the deep sea,
 Waking blowing twilights
 Like hidden harmony.

I have seen the wind
 Lift gold waves of a stream,
 Revealing the weirdness,
 The dark, endless dream.

I shall know the wind
 In a strange, dim place
 Like a cool pillow
 Against my face . . .

Reviews

SHERWOOD ANDERSON

WE have come a long way from the pattern-making preoccupations of an Henry James when we can welcome a statement from an artist with as bold a contrasting simplicity as the answer that Sherwood Anderson once gave me to an analysis I had attempted of one of his short stories. "I am in truth mighty little interested in any discussions of art or life, or what a man's place in the scheme of things may be. It has to be done, I suppose, but after all there is the *fact* of life. Its story wants telling and singing. That's what I want,—the tale and the song of it." And it is that Anderson has so pre-eminently captured the "tale and the song of it" that I find his words so acceptable—at least in so far as they relate to his own work.

I spoke of an "attempted" analysis because of being since satisfied that beyond the possibility of a certain uneven surface penetration, Anderson's stories possess a too defiant and timeless solidity,—too much a share of life and clay itself,—to be tagged and listed with mechanical precisions. And what a satisfaction this is, to read stories over and again without a bundle of dry bones and cogwheels of "situations" and "plots" spilling out into one's lap. It must have been because of a surfeit of such disappointments that "Winesburg, Ohio," when it first appeared, kept me up a whole night in a steady crescendo of emotions. Here was "stark realism," but a realism simplified and strangely sophisticated by the inscrutable soil. And by "soil" I mean something much

more than a kind of local colour. There is plenty of that quite wonderfully applied, both in "Winesburg" and in "Poor White," but there is also something more important and rare than this,—a contact with animal and earthy life so indefinably yet powerfully used as a very foundation to the stories that it might be compared to the sap that pervades the tree-trunk, branches, and twigs. Let me quote an instance of what I mean from "Poor White."

Clara Butterworth, merging into womanhood, is musing in the shadows of her father's barns. . . .

"Clara jumped quickly out of the hammock and walked about under the trees in the orchard. Her thoughts of Jim Priest's youth startled her. It was as though she had walked suddenly into a room where a man and woman were making love. Her cheeks burned and her hands trembled. As she walked slowly through the clumps of grass and weeds that grew between the trees where the sunlight struggled through, bees coming home to the hives heavily laden with honey flew in droves about her head. There was something heady and purposeful about the song of labor that arose out of the beehives. It got into her blood and her step quickened. The words of Jim Priest that kept running through her head seemed a part of the same song, the bees were singing. 'The sap has begun to run up the tree,' she repeated aloud. How significant and strange the words seemed! They were the kind of words a lover might use in speaking to his be-

loved. She had read many novels, but they contained no such words. It was better so. It was better to hear them from human lips."

This is but one of many remembered paragraphs and pages from which arises a lyricism, deliberate and light, as a curl of milk-weed seeds drawn toward the sun. It is his love for rows of corn on flat lands, fields bending over rolling Ohio hills, and the smell of barns under the warm hours of noon, that has given Anderson's descriptions of modern city life with its mechanical distortions of humanity, such thrust and bite.

In "Poor White" there is the "machine" of modern existence,—the monster that is upon us all. No one who treats however slightly of the lives of the poor or middle classes can escape the issues of its present hold on us. It has seduced the strongest from the land to the cities, and in most cases made empty and meaningless their lives. It has cheapened the worth of all human commodities and even the value of human lives. It has destroyed the pride and pleasure of the craftsman in his work. "Hugh McVey," the son of a tramp of sordid Missouri River life, becomes a "dreamer of the machines" who invents one after another typical practical improvement such as harvesters, potato-planters, etc., which enrich the speculating manufacturers who grasp at them, bow down before them, and wrangle about them. McVey goes on inventing and himself making money, but finds himself in time becoming more and more indifferent and disappointed. Most of all he is bewildered by the ever greater rush of the new

industrialism with its "becoming" towns, its smoke and squalor. He has found no satisfactory foothold. His own machines have robbed him of something and left nothing in its place. He cannot be satisfied with himself as a machine producing machines. Unconsciously he is being urged by more natural impulses that he has perhaps denied too long. Like so many others he is lost among cogs and complicated springs. One sees all through this book how character is bent, blunted, regulated, diverted, or lacerated by the "machine." There is the perfect episode of a harness-maker whose love for manual perfection of craft finally drives him to the murder of an unstart apprentice who had insisted in overruling him by adopting machine made saddles as substitutes for the carefully wrought saddles of the old man.

Looking back at two earlier books, "Windy McPherson's Son" and "Marching Men," one can see a great advance in "Poor White." There has always been the propagandist threatening the artist in Anderson; and in these first two books the propagandist comes out too dangerously near a victory to satisfy us despite the much brilliant description these books contain. Since then he has freed himself from much of this. Not that he has chosen to ignore any fact or problems, but rather that he has succeeded in treating them more impersonally, incorporating them, less obviously, in character and action. To appreciate this advance from the seductive stagnations of sentimentality to a clear acceptance and description of our life to-day for what it be worth, is to realize how few other Americans have had the

courage, let alone the vision, to do anything like it. Norris and Dreiser, and one or two others of native birth have been the only ones. In Anderson there has been some great sincerity, perhaps the element of the "soil" itself personified in him, that has made him refuse to turn aside to offer the crowds those profitable "lollypops" that have "made" and ruined so many other of our writers.

Of course it is patent that people do not like to be told the truth. Especially our Puritans! "Winesburg" was the first book to tell the truth about our small mid-western towns. And what a fury it threw some people into! It seemed to be so much easier for those people to fling back,—*"Neuroticism!" "Obscenity!"* and *"Exaggeration!"* than to recognize themselves and others there. I could understand it perfectly myself, having lived for a while in a small town of similar location and colour. But my real point for admiring it was not because it merely told the truth; it was that "Winesburg" represented a work of distinct aesthetic achievement, an example of synthetic form,—not merely a medley of a thousand exterior details such as Lewis's "Main Street." It takes more than the recognition of facts as facts to move us in fiction. There must be some beauty wrung from them to hold us long. We can recognize this quality without having it pointed out to us if our hearts are not too deadened, our sensibilities too dulled. In "Winesburg," the windows, alleys and lanes of the place are opened to us to find what we may. There is an exalting pathos in the episode called "Mother." The ironic humor and richness of "An Awakening" has the

vivid and unbroken vitality of a silhouette. "Paper Pills," to me the finest thing in the book, has an idyllic beauty that sets it beside the old legend of "Daphnis and Chloe," and there are other chapters and episodes unmatched anywhere.

During the last two years there have been some short stories published in various magazines, such as "I Want to Know Why," "The Triumph of the Egg," "The New Englander," and "The Other Woman," that I look forward to seeing collected into a volume. I would like to see Anderson handle the negro in fiction. So far it has not been done by anyone without sentimentality or cruelty, but the directness of his vision would produce something new and deep in this direction. In the winter and spring of '20 Anderson was in southern Alabama near the sea finishing "Poor White," and his interest in the black man became so aroused that he wrote me,—*"The negroes are the living wonder of this place. What a tale if someone could penetrate into the home and the life of the Southern negro and not taint it in the ordinary superficial way."*

The time has already arrived when Anderson is beginning to be recognized as among the few first recorders of the life of a people coming to some state of self-consciousness. He is without sentimentality; and he makes no pretense of offering solutions. He has a humanity and simplicity that is quite baffling in depth and suggestiveness, and his steady and deliberate growth is proving right along the promise it gives of finer work. A verse from his "A New Testament" has an oddly personal tone to it:

"My mind is the mind of a little man with thin legs who sells cigars in a store. My mind is the mind of a cripple who died in an alleyway at Cleveland, Ohio. My mind is the mind of a child who fell into a well, the mind of one who cleans the streets of a city, of an actor who walks up and down on a stage."

HART CRANE.



JAKE

By EUNICE TIETJENS

(*Boni and Liveright, 1921*)

MISS Tietjens' book is impressive. Not once does she noisily assert an undeniable commonplace. At no time is she becalmed upon a sea of odious detail. She pays her readers an unusual compliment—she assumes in them an average degree of intelligence and imagination. One feels that her characters undoubtedly brush their teeth, yet one is spared a pseudo-scientific discussion upon the merits of rival tooth-pastes.

"Jake" is neither a card-catalogue of physical sensations, nor an over-generous helping of spiritual blancmange.

It is that rare and happy thing, a well-balanced book. There is a keen and vigorous analysis of character, a serenity of style, a certain courageous simplicity, which is reminiscent of the Russians. Of the Russians of the pre-brainstorm period.

One's quarrel with so many books—the small-town fiction in particular—is that they do almost nothing to stir the imagination. At the most they leave one drearily well-informed concerning the bodily and mental habits of a few

amazingly uninteresting people. With strange perserverance and with meticulous care, certain authors have fostered the belief that the Middle West is vapid, sad and tedious. Lovingly they have dwelt upon its dullness.

And now comes Miss Tietjens like a ray of light to illumine this dolorous region. She demolishes their theory that the Middle West is necessarily depressing. She makes the surprisingly pleasant discovery that it is not the source of all boredom.

Its small towns still possess a trace of romance and their inhabitants are not all people from whom one must flee. At their approach one does not feel an irresistible desire to join that charming society of Sir James Barrie's—the Society for Doing Without Some People.

Miss Tietjens can deal with tragedy without suffering from an atrophied sense of humor. And it is one of life's little ironies that so often the tragic is so ridiculous. "Tragedies of the body have a certain stark validity of their own. Death or serious physical injury stops temporarily the wheels of living; room is made for suffering, a proper stage-setting is provided. High drama stalks in proper habiliments. But tragedy of the spirit is always sandwiched in between the mechanics of living, between the soup and the meat at dinner, between office hours and the putting of the children to bed. Living cannot be halted merely because a soul is in agony, and the slaying of hearts is done anywhere, anyhow, in the left-over scraps of time and strength."

Jake is more than credible—he is an actuality. Surely everyone has known

him. The lovable failure who "never steered his course in the main, but went where the winds blew him, yet he went with such a good grace."

He is of those for whom tragedy is inevitable. One of the sensitive, self-distrustful type, with sad eyes and a comic mouth, whose tragedies are without dignity.

Ruth and Charley are a delight. One thanks Miss Tietjens for them, sincerely. Happy, clever, tolerant, they would have seemed a fairly normal couple in the old days. In those sweeter, simpler days when most friction had a silver lining.

But now so many novelists make a cult of unpleasantness, and see the

clouds as persistently as their predecessors saw the lining—to the exclusion of all else. Apparently, Miss Tietjens is going to be a novelist who sees both. A novelist who is biased in favor of neither the rich nor the poor; the foolishly happy, nor the abjectly miserable; nor the hopelessly dull.

She knows her Freud. Alas!—"Où sont les neiges d'antan!". Not very long ago, one would have said "She knows her Ibsen"!

Perhaps she leans a little heavily upon fortuitous happenings. But then, why shouldn't she? "Jake" rings true and truth is quite often stranger than fiction. Especially modern fiction.

ALICE SESSUMS LEOVY.

